GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:602
ANSWERED ON:20.07.2016
Internet Subscriber Base
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of urban and rural Internet subscriber base in the country as on date, State and service provider-wise;

(b) whether the internet penetration and growth in the country is lagging as against its Asian peers;

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to improve internet penetration particularly in rural areas; and

(d) the measures taken to ensure digital literacy among students and adults in rural areas?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) The details of urban and rural internet subscriber base in the country as on 31st March 2016, State and service provider wise are placed at Annexure-I and Annexure-II.

(b)&(c) As per ITU statistics 2015 India is ahead of its many Asian peers in terms of Internet growth. However in terms of internet penetration, it is lagging.

The Government has taken various measures to improve internet penetration in rural areas. National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project, renamed as BharatNet, is planned to establish a network infrastructure by connecting all Gram Panchayats (approx. 2.5 lakh) in the country through Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) by using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media, for providing broadband connectivity by all categories of service providers on non-discriminatory basis.

The project is planned to be implemented in three phases. Under first phase of the project, 1 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs) is to be connected by laying underground OFC by March 2017. Under second phase, connectivity will be provided to remaining 1.5 lakh GPs in the country using an optimal mix of underground fibre, fibre over power lines, radio and satellite media, by December, 2018. A state- of- the-art, future-proof network, including fibre between districts and blocks and with for 5G services and Internet of Things era with underground OFC in ring architecture, is planned to be completed by 2023.

As on 09.07.2016, Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) has been laid to 54,023 Gram Panchayats (GPs) with a total length of 1,25,642 km. Out of these, 7312 GPs have been provided with broadband connectivity.

(d) DeitY has approved the following two Schemes for providing Digital Literacy to the masses:
(i) Scheme for IT Mass Literacy (National Digital Literacy Mission):
A scheme for IT Mass Literacy (now renamed as National Digital Literacy Mission) was approved in March, 2014.The total budget outlay of the Scheme is Rs. 97.02 crore. The duration of the Scheme was initially 18 months, which was later extended up to 30.06.2016. The Scheme aims to train 10 lakh persons. The Scheme has been launched on 21.8.2014 by Hon"ble Prime Minister in Ranchi, Jharkhand.
(ii) Scheme for "Digital Saksharta Abhiyan" (DISHA) under "Digital India"
Digital Empowerment of citizens by providing Universal Digital Literacy is an integral component of the vision of "Digital India" initiative. Keeping this in view, a scheme "Digital Saksharta Abhiyan" (DISHA) was approved to make 42.5 lakh persons digitally literate in selected households throughout the country. The total budget outlay of the Scheme is Rs 380 crore over a period of 4 years. The Scheme was approved on 09.12.2014 under Digital India Initiative
Both the above Scheme are being implemented concurrently. So far, under the NDLM/DISHA schemes around 72.92 lakh candidates have been trained and approximately 33.15 lakh candidates have been certified. A total of 1952 training partners are involved under these schemes. Out of these Training Partners/ Training Centres, around 57% exist in rural areas (includes around 30,000 CSCs).
Further, in line with the FM"s budget announcement, DeitY is formulating a Scheme titled "Pradhan Mantri Grameen Saksharta Abhiyan" (PMGDISHA) to digitally literate 6 crore persons from rural India. The Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) during its meeting held on 06-07-2016 has recommended the proposal.